

# Tobyhanna Army Depot

**EPA Region 3**

Pennsylvania

Monroe County

Tobyhanna

**EPA ID#** PA5213820892

**Last Update:** May 2002

**11th Congressional District**

**Other Names:** None

## Current Site Status

The Army, EPA, and the State worked closely to achieve National Priorities List ('NPL') construction completion by September 2000. In September 2000, two Records of Decision ('RODs') for how to clean up the site were signed and five areas of concern ('AOCs') were closed out as "No Further Action". In 2000, a base-wide ecological risk assessment was also completed and sediment contaminant levels at permitted storm sewer outfalls will continue to be monitored by the Army under the Depot's Environmental management Program. The Army will also continue to monitor natural attenuation on a semi-annual basis at two former waste storage areas, as well as at the closed sanitary landfill. A partial deletion of the site from the NPL was completed in November 2001. Areas remaining on the NPL consist of three separate groundwater plumes which encompass approximately 15 acres.

## Site Description

Tobyhanna Army Depot ('TYAD') located in Monroe County, Pennsylvania is a 1,293 acre military facility. The current function of this facility is to design, fabricate, repair, and modify a wide range of communications and electronics systems. From the 1950s to early 1960s, the Army used burning and disposal areas in the southern portion of the base. Specific wastes handled included garbage, construction rubble, scrap metal, drums, and solvents. In addition, Army contractors used another nearby area as drum staging for temporary storage and disposal of building materials and other wastes generated during construction of the existing base. The Army first discovered volatile organic compounds ('VOCs') in an on-post drinking water well in 1981. In the mid-1980s, Monroe county and the state sampled nearby residential wells and identified VOC contamination. As a result, the Army provided the affected residents with an alternate water source and also conducted numerous investigations which led to the potential source areas of these contaminants. The site was then proposed to the NPL in July 1989 and placed on the list in August 1990.

In 1996, two RODs were signed for TYAD. The first ROD addressed two former hazardous waste storage buildings which had been closed out under RCRA regulations. The second ROD addressed a former electrical substation. In 1994, the Army removed 1.8 cubic yards of polychlorinated biphenyl ('PCB') contaminated soils from this area. The selected remedy for both sites was "No Further Action".

In 1997, a ROD was signed for the VOC-contaminated groundwater plume which was discussed previously. The alternative chosen in the ROD was natural attenuation, institutional controls, and long-term monitoring.

In 2000, two RODs were signed for TYAD. The first ROD addressed an area of unexploded ordnance ('UXO'). The alternative chosen in the ROD was institutional controls. The second ROD addressed VOC-contaminated groundwater plume associated with the closed sanitary landfill. The alternative chosen in the ROD was natural attenuation, institutional controls, and long-term monitoring.

When Tobyhanna was initially listed on the NPL, there were a total of 65 AOCs to be investigated and addressed. The 5 RODs discussed above address 7 of the AOCs. In March 1998 the Army and EPA

signed a closeout document to identify 35 AOCs as needing no further action. In September 1999, the Army and EPA signed a closeout document for an additional 18 AOCs that required no further action. In September 2000, the Army and EPA signed the final closeout document for the final 5 AOCs that required no further action, except that sediment contaminant levels at permitted storm sewer outfalls will continue to be monitored by the Army under the Depot's Environmental Management Program.

### **Site Responsibility**

This site is being addressed through Federal actions.

### **NPL Listing History**

Proposed Date: 07/14/1989

Final Date: 08/30/1990

## **Threats and Contaminants**

Originally, the primary contaminants of concern in ground water near Areas A and B included VOCs. The VOCs detected include trans-1,2-dichloroethylene ('DCE'), trichloroethylene ('TCE'), tetrachloroethylene ('PCE'), and vinyl chloride. Contaminated ground water posed a threat to the health of area residents through ingestion of, and direct contact with, VOCs. Other concerns included UXO and elevated risk to environmental receptors due to sediment contaminant levels at permitted storm sewer outfalls in on-post waterways.

## **Cleanup Progress**

### **Threat Mitigated by Physical Cleanup Work**

The Army had been conducting bi-annual sampling of both on-post monitoring wells and residential wells since 1988. The sample results show that the concentrations of VOCs have been steadily decreasing over time. In 1995, the Army excavated and removed approximately 2,100 cubic yards of VOC-contaminated soils and several deteriorated drums from the drum staging area. This area is believed to be the major source of the VOCs found in the groundwater. The ROD was signed on September 30, 1997 by EPA and the Army requiring natural attenuation, long-term monitoring, and institutional controls. The rationale for selecting this alternative is that the

probable source of the contamination has been removed, concentrations of VOCs in the groundwater are decreasing, and residents with contaminated wells have been given an alternate supply of water. As part of the natural attenuation remedy, the Army will ensure through the use of institutional controls that residents will not be exposed to contaminated drinking water. Also, the Army will continue to conduct bi-annual monitoring of both on-post and off-post wells until such time that no wells are found to contain contaminants above the MCLs. An active remedy of groundwater extraction and treatment may slightly reduce the overall time frame for cleanup; however, because natural attenuation, long-term monitoring and institutional controls will be just as protective of human health and the environment, the additional costs associated with an active treatment system do not appear to be justified in this case. The inactive sanitary landfill had a small VOC-contaminated groundwater plume. There is currently no one using the groundwater for potable purposes. The 300+ acre former artillery range was fenced and will continue to be monitored.

## **Contacts**

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Detailed public files (Administrative Record) on EPA's actions and decisions for this site can be examined at the following location:

Coolbaugh Township Municipal Building

5500 Memorial Boulevard

Tobyhanna, PA 18466

Tobyhanna Army Depot

Public Affairs Office

11 Midway Road, Building 11  
Tobyhanna, PA 18466-5076